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ABSTRACT

Practical information is provided on sexual harassment within the vocational education context. A definition of sexual harassment is followed by examples of practices or behaviors that may be used to determine sexual harassment, including both physical conduct and communication. Possible impacts of sexual harassment in a vocational training program are then listed. Descriptions are provided of six situations involving possible sexual harassment in a vocational education setting. The reader is asked to decide whether each is an example of sexual harassment and whether any actions are advisable. Recommendations are made regarding what vocational education instructors can do and what options are available to victims. (YLB)

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SEX BIAS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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Sexual harassment can best be defined as unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

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PART 1964

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The following practices or behaviors may be used to determine sexual harassment:

Physical Conduct:

Patting
Pinching
Kissing
Rubbing Against
Grabbing
Leaning Over/On
Exposing Self
Rape
Sodomy
Assault
Bumping
Stroking
Cornering
Mauling
Hugging

Communication:

Jokes--to make someone a fool, put down a group, or a way to express hostility.

Comments on Appearance--verbal interaction about someone's body or dress which have little to do with work-related behaviors.

Sexual Remarks--from subtle hints to direct propositions. Whistling, lip smacking, animal sounds.

Invitations--to lunch, drinks or dinner leading to ????

Threats--from hints such as "Your life would be easier if you were more friendly," or "If you want an A, we'd better get to know each other better this evening."

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Other types of sexual harassment may include:

--displaying sexist cartoons, magazines and pictures

--leaving notes

--misuse of job-related details

--misuse of evaluations

--misuse of training

The possible impact of sexual harassment in a vocational training program may be:

--absenteeism

--low inter-personal relationships

--anger

--poor class performance

--stress related illness

--low motivation

--poor coorperation

--safety violations

Be your own judge:

1. Tom Smith, Woods II Instructor, is an outgoing fellow with a cheery greeting for everyone. He often greets one of the secretaries with a remark such as, "Hey, today you're looking great! That's a goodlooking outfit you're wearing."

Is this sexual harassment? Yes_____ No_____

Are any actions advisable? _____

2. The principal calls every female instructor "Toots" or "Honey." When they attend staff meetings, he addresses them in

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that manner. It is a small school. He is a friendly, folksy person.

Is this sexual harassment? Yes_____ No_____

Are any actions advisable? _____

3. Jake Ishi enjoys his role as the office clown. Usually his stories are enjoyed by everyone. Lately, many of his stories have concerned sexual activity. Martha Mesa does not like the stories, although she laughs with everyone else.

Is this sexual harassment? Yes_____ No_____

Are any actions advisable? _____

4. Debbie Duke is an automotive repair student. She looks upon herself as "one of the boys" and frequently initiates a round of sexual jokes during class. She has even "goosed" one of the other male students.

Is this sexual harassment? Yes_____ No_____

Are any actions advisable? _____

5. Mary Tanaka, the Home Economics Teacher, is a very friendly outgoing person. She greets people with a big smile and vigorous handshake. She frequently touches her students while talking with them, placing her hand on their shoulder. She displays this behavior with her peers and supervisors, male and female. No one objects to her behavior.

Is this sexual harassment? Yes_____ No_____

Are any actions advisable? _____

6. Trudy Angelo is a second-year community college graphic arts student. Her instructor has asked her out for a date on several occasions, but she has always declined using the excuse that she is too busy studying. He has now offered to tutor her after class to bring up her grade point average. She is unsure of his intentions and does not know whether to accept the offer or not.

Is this sexual harassment? Yes_____ No_____

Are any actions advisable? _____

What can Vocational Education Instructors Do?

a. Examine your attitudes and behaviors.

b. Recognize that sexual harassment occurs at the workplace.

c. Be sensitive to complaints of sexual harassment from members of your staff or students.

d. Remember that no one has the right to be sexually harassed.

e. Do not use behaviors or communications that can be defined as sexual harassment.

Options available to victims:

a. Recognize it and understand that it is not your fault.

b. Confront the offender if you feel he/she can be reasoned with or scared off.

c. Keep a written record of the incidents, your complaints and results. Record name in your documentation.

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d. Talk to friends, relatives or co-workers. Get a strong support system at the time.

e. If you wish to talk to someone outside your agency contact the:

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Enforcement Division

Phone: (202) 634-1947